

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



THIRD SEMESTER
UNIT 5



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

UNIT 5: WORK AS MISSION



IN THIS SESSION

- :: Work: A Blessing or a Curse?
- :: Christ's Work Upon Our Work
- :: Attributes of a Christ-Centered Worker
 - :: Limitations of Work
- :: How is Our Work Mission Work?

UNIT 5: Work As Mission

// OPENING SCRIPTURE

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men..."

Colossians 3:23

// OPENING PRAYER

// FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

- Memory Verse :: Romans 12:4-5
- Homework :: Did everyone in the group complete this unit's work and activities (if applicable)?

UNIT 5: Work As Mission

// Work: A Blessing Or a Curse

:: **Read Genesis 1:26-28 & Genesis 2:15.** This is the account of Creation. Human beings were made by God, in His image, and given work to do. From these two passages, what is the extent of mankind's work? What is he told to do?

:: God gave humans the stewardship over the earth. "Fill the earth and subdue it." "Work the garden and keep it." Think about the connection between our design and our purpose. Write your thoughts below.

:: In Genesis 1:28, mankind is told to "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it**". What do you suppose "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" means? Do you think there is more implied here than procreation? If so, what else could God mean?

:: God gave humans work to do before the Fall, before sin, and before anything was wrong with the world. That means work is not a curse. Work is a good thing—it is something we were designed to do. Without work there is often a sense of inner loss and emptiness.

:: The Fall changed the nature of work. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden, everything changed. Read **Genesis 3:17-19** in the ESV. God says, “**cursed is the ground because of you**”. God lists four characteristics of work that are a result of sin:

- > “in _____ **you shall eat of it all the days of your life...**” || Work is hard.
- > “_____ **and** _____ **it shall bring forth for you...**” || Work is frustrating.
- > “**By the** _____ **of your face you shall eat...**” || Work is tiring.
- > “**till you** _____ **to the ground...**” || Work is endless.

:: Work is difficult, frustrating, tiring, and it never ends. It was not this way before the Fall. This is the effect of sin.

:: Adam lived in an agrarian world. So the effects of sin on *his* work related to farming. However, the principles apply to us today. Answer these questions about your work below and share with your group.

> How is *your* work hard?

> What makes *your* work frustrating?

> How does *your* work make you tired?

> How is *your* work never done?

:: So, is work a blessing or a curse? It's both. It is a cursed blessing.

// Christ's Work Upon Our Work

:: The work of Christ through the gospel is far reaching. On the cross, Jesus did not abolish work, He redeemed it. The difficult, frustrating weariness of our never-ending work has been redeemed. The curse has been reversed. In Christ, work can be used for the glory of God. Fill out 1Corinthians 10:31, **“So, whether you eat or drink, or _____ you do, do all to the glory of God.”**

:: The ancient world separated the natural realm from the spiritual realm. Plato taught the natural world was bad and the spiritual world was good. The Bible does not support such a dichotomy. In the Bible, there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular. Since Christ redeemed work, making clothes, practicing law, mending bodies, advancing science, manufacturing cars, and nurturing children is all good work to be done for the glory of God.

:: The view that an artist or a banker or a factory worker is doing secular work, while a professional minister is doing spiritual work is wrong. All work has dignity and can be used for God's glory. There is no distinction between secular and spiritual. We should not separate our faith from our work.

:: What are some implications of the redemption of Christ on work to your life?

:: Work as a moral element to it. There is a right way to approach work and there is a sinful way to approach work. What are some sinful ways to approach work?

“...the works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they may be, do not differ on whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks...all works are measured before God by faith alone.” - Martin Luther

// Attributes Of A Christ-Centered Worker

:: Read **Ephesians 6:5-9** & **1Peter 2:18-25**. When you read the word “bondservants” or “servants” think employees. When you read “masters” think supervisors. Answer the following questions:

> What are the practical guidelines for employees according to these passages?

> What are the practical guidelines for supervisors according to these passages?

> What instruction does the 1Peter 2 passage give to employees with “bad bosses”?

> The Ephesians 6 passage says bondservants and masters both work for who?

:: Shouldn't Christians be the very best, most productive employees? Shouldn't Christian supervisors be the very best leaders? Why is this not always the case? What is missing?

:: We've all failed to live up to these standards. Jesus did His Father's work perfectly. How does Jesus' work in the gospel change our heart to follow His example?

// The Limitations of Work

Working Too Much...

:: You will not have a meaningful life without work, but you cannot make work the meaning of your life. There is a tendency to look to work to provide us worth, meaning, purpose, and security. But anything apart from God that we use to give us these things is idolatry. What are some ways work can become an idol?

:: Read **1Timothy 6:17-19**. How is the Apostle Paul protecting wealthy Christians from looking at money as an idol? How does this passage apply to us?

Working Too Little...

:: Lookup the word “sluggard” in a Bible concordance. Which three verses about the sluggard which stood out to you most? Give a brief reason why.

:: Read **1Thessalonians 3:6-12** in the ESV. Answer the following questions from the text.

> What do you think Paul means by “**If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat**”?

> What do you think Paul means by “**work quietly and earn their own living**”? (HINT: 4:11-12)

> Why do you think Paul tells the Thessalonians to “**keep away from any brothers who is walking in idleness**”?

:: Proverbs 18:9, “**Whoever is slack in his work is a brother** (meaning “equivalent”, in the sense of similarity) **to him who destroys.**” Explain.

Working Too Long...

:: In the account of Creation, God rested on the Seventh day. Have you ever wondered why God “rested”? He doesn’t get tired. The Hebrew word for “rest” in that passage means “ceased” or “stopped”. This day of rest is called the Sabbath. God commanded the Hebrews to cease from their labor one day per week. The 4th commandment, “**Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.**”

:: Jesus taught the Sabbath was made for man. We ought to take a day every week and cease from our labor.

:: What are the benefits of resting one day per week? What are the problems of skipping rest?

// How Is Our Work Missions Work?

:: Let's put all this together. Work has been redeemed by Christ. Therefore, we can use work to bring glory to God. Work is more than just a means to provide for our needs. Work is mission work. We do this through demonstrating the beauty of the gospel by being exemplary employees and excellent supervisors. We also do this by keeping work in the right place.

:: In this way, Christians let the transformational light of the gospel shine through their lives. Jesus said it like this, **“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”** (Mt 5:17)

:: How can being a good worker be used by God to draw unbelievers to Him?

:: There is another way work is used by God for His mission. Work is meant for more than just providing for the needs of our family. It's bigger than that. Consider how the Apostle Paul encourages the Corinthian church during their time of plenty in 2Corinthians 8-9.

> **“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for _____ and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be _____ in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.”** (9:10-11, ESV)

:: God provided for the Corinthians so they could provide for Paul so that Paul could advance the gospel and meet the needs of the churches so that God would be praised. God supplies our basic needs, the rest He gives for us to sow into the mission of God. In this way, our work is for His mission!

“So you have three possibilities in world missions. You can be a goer, a sender, or disobedient.”
- John Piper

UNIT 5: Work As Mission

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men..."

Colossians 3:23

:: Complete the Unit 6 worksheets and activities (when applicable).

:: Pray for the needs of your brothers/sisters in your group.

:: Ensure you are able to attend the next session.